



# THE LIBERTY BOYS OF '76

A Weekly Magazine containing Stories of the American Revolution.

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NEW YORK, AUGUST 1, 1902.

Price 5 Cents.

## THE LIBERTY BOYS' DEAD LINE!

OR, "CROSS IT, IF YOU DARE!"

By HARRY MOORE.



Dick, sword in hand, stood in front of the "Liberty Boys." "The line between those two flags is the dead line," he called out to the redcoats; "cross it, if you dare!"



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## CHAPTER I.

### SUMPTER AND HIS BAND.

One afternoon in the early part of August, of the year 1780, a party of men were lying on the grass in a beautiful little glen amid the hills of Northern South Carolina. Near at hand rolled the waters of the Catawba River, and back a ways, in the other direction, many horses were grazing contentedly.

There were perhaps two hundred of the men, and they were a somewhat nondescript-looking lot. They were dressed in almost as many styles as there were men, but the predominating dress was the rough homespun blue, so common in those days, and the work of the wives, sisters and daughters of the settlers of the region. Some of the men wore suits made of the skins of wild animals, and nearly all wore squirrel-skin caps, with the tail streaming down the back.

On the ground, within easy reach of each and every man, was a long, business-like appearing rifle, and many of the men had pistols thrust in their belts, while not a few wore swords.

These men comprised the partisan band under the leadership of Sumpter, then almost as famous throughout the South as Francis Marion, the "Swamp Fox." Indeed, the two often worked together, being the best of friends, and the same dauntless spirit operating to draw them together when there was work to be done that was too heavy for the one party.

The men were talking and smoking, and they were evidently enjoying themselves very much. They were brave men, and men who had no thought of the morrow; they had learned by sad experience that for each one of them it was possible that there would be no to-morrow.

Suddenly, as the men lay there, they heard the sentinel hail some one:

"Halt! Who comes there?"

The men listened but did not hear any reply. Presently,

however, the bushes parted at one side of the little glen and a boy of twelve or thirteen years stepped into view.

The boy was a homely looking little fellow, was very roughly dressed in blue homespun, showing the signs of much wear, was barefooted and had on a squirrel cap, such as was worn by the partisans lying near by on the ground.

"Hello, sonny!" said one of the men, lazily, blowing a smoke-ring in the air. "Who air you?"

"I'm Andy Jackson," was the reply.

"Andy Jackson, hey?"

"Yes, sir."

"Whar d'ye live?"

"I live around here, sir."

"Ye live aroun' heer? Don' ye hev no settled place uv livin', sonny?"

"No, sir, I haven't any parents or any home."

"Oh, that's it?"

"Yes."

"Waal, whut d'ye want heer?"

"I want to see the commander of your force, sir."

"Oh, thet's whut ye want?"

"Yes, sir."

The man rose to a sitting posture, while his comrades eyed the barefooted boy lazily, and pointed to a man sitting over at the farther side of the camp, engaged in looking over some papers.

"See ther man lookin' at ther papers?" the guerilla asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Thet's our commander."

"Thank you; what's his name?"

"Tom Sumpter."

The boy walked across the encampment and paused in front of the man who was looking at the papers. Thomas Sumpter was a large, rawboned man, with an aggressive but rather pleasant-looking face, and presently he glanced up and saw the boy standing there. He looked the boy over quietly and quickly, and then said, not unkindly:

"Who are you?"



"My name is Andy Jackson, sir."

"Well, Andy, what can I do for you?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Nothing?"

"No; I thought that perhaps I might do something for you."

"Ah!" with a searching glance at the boy. "You thought you might do something for me?"

"Yes, sir."

"What?"

The boy hesitated an instant, glanced around and then asked:

"You are Thomas Sumpter?"

"Yes, my boy."

"And these are your men?"

"Yes."

"They are patriots?"

The man hesitated and eyed the boy closely for a few moments, and then he nodded.

"Yes, they are patriots," he acknowledged.

"Good! then I have some information for you."

"What is it?"

"I can tell you where there is a force of redcoats."

Thomas Sumpter started, and an eager look appeared in his eyes.

"You can?" he interrogated.

"Yes."

"Where is this force of redcoats?"

"Do you know where Hanging Rock is?"

The partisan chief nodded.

"Yes."

"Well, the redcoats are there."

"How many are there, do you know?"

"There is a whole regiment."

"So many as that?"

"Yes, sir."

"How do you know this?"

"I was there and saw them."

"You were there?"

"I was."

"When?"

"Yesterday."

"How came you to be there?"

"I went with a neighbor to help him. He took a load of produce there to sell it to the soldiers."

"So that is how you happened to be there, is it?"

"Yes, sir."

"But perhaps it was only a temporary camp of the redcoats. They may not be there now."

"Yes, they are. I heard some of them talking about going hunting and fishing, and having a good time while they were stationed there."

"And you think it is a permanent post?"

"Well, I'm sure they intend to stay a week or more anyway."

Sumpter was silent a few moments, evidently pondering, and then he looked up.

"You are a patriot, my boy?" he asked.

"I am!" was the prompt reply.

"How did you know my party was here?"

"I was out hunting a cow which had strayed away from the home of the man I was working for, and I happened to see you as you were riding through the timber. I followed, and saw you go into camp, and when I had found the cow and driven her home, I came here to see you for I suspected that you were a patriot band."

"You have done well, my boy. I am much obliged to you for the information which you have brought me."

"You are welcome, sir."

"There is one question I wish to ask: Did you say anything to the man for whom you have been working, about seeing us?"

The boy shook his head.

"No, sir," he replied.

"Why did you not do so?"

"For the reason that he is a Tory, and I did not want him to know anything about you for fear he would tell the news to the British, when he takes the load of produce in the morning."

"That was right; you are a bright boy, Andy."

The boy blushed, but said nothing. It was evident that he was not one who would be easily spoiled by flattery.

Sumpter was silent a few moments, thinking, and then said:

"How would you like to be of still further use to me, my boy?"

"I would like it, first rate," was the prompt reply, and the eager look in the boy's eyes showed that he meant what he said.

"Very well; you can be of considerable use to me if you wish to be."

"You have only to tell me how, sir. I shall be only too glad to do anything that I can to in any way help the great cause."

"What I wish you to do is this: To return to the home of the farmer and go with him to-morrow when he takes the load of produce to sell to the redcoats."

"Yes."



"And while you are at the encampment, make the very best use you can of your eyes."

"I will do it, sir."

"Take note of everything. Notice where the sentinels are stationed and whether or not there are any points where it would be possible to approach without being seen."

"Yes, sir."

"You will do this?"

"I will."

The boy's eyes shone. It was evident that he was glad to have something of importance to do.

"Very well; but be very careful not to do anything to bring down suspicion on your head, my boy."

"I will be careful."

"You will in reality be a patriot spy, and a spy in the enemy's camp is always in great danger."

"I know that, sir; but I don't think they will suspect me. I am only a boy, and was there yesterday."

"True. Well, I hope you will not be suspected."

"I don't think I will be."

"As soon as you can do so, after coming back to-morrow, come and bring me the news you have secured, my boy."

"I will do so; will you be here?"

"Yes, at this same spot."

"Very well; and I want to ask a favor of you, sir."

"What is it?"

"I want to ask you to let me go with you when you go to attack the British."

Sumpter, grim and stern of demeanor, looked at the boy seriously and with an amused twinkle in his eyes.

"Why do you wish to go with us?" he asked.

"I want a chance to fight against the redcoats."

"You wish to fight the redcoats?"

"Yes, sir."

"What do you think you could do?"

"I can shoot as good as any man, sir."

"Ah, you can?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you really wish to fight for the great cause?"

"I do!"

"But you are only a boy."

"I know that; but I can fight, and I will, too! You must give me the chance and I'll stick to it as long as any of your men do."

Sumpter laughed.

"All right," he said; "you shall go with us, and when it comes to a fight you may go in and show the redcoats what a boy can do."

"Thank you, sir."

Then the boy took his departure, and as soon as he had disappeared Sumpter called a tall, grizzled man to him and said:

"Follow the boy, secretly; see where he goes and what he does, and return and report."

"All right, Tom."

Then the tall, gaunt man plunged into the timber at the same point where the boy had disappeared, and was out of sight in a twinkling.

Then Sumpter motioned to another man. The fellow was, like the other, tall and gaunt, but he had a shrewd face and keen eyes, as well as an air of alertness that proved he was wide awake.

"Jeff," said Sumpter, "I have a task for you."

"Yas?" was the imperturbable reply.

"It is a difficult task."

"Whut is et?" Evidently the man called Jeff did not believe in beating about the bush.

"I want you to find the 'Swamp Fox' and have him and his band here by this time to-morrow evening, if possible."

"All right; enny other instruckshuns?"

"No, that is all. Find Marion and his men and get them here on time; that is all you have to do, and you may do it in your own way."

"All right; I'll git 'em heer ef theer is enny sech thing ez doin' uv et."

Then the gaunt mountaineer turned and strode away, disappearing amid the trees at the farther side of the glen.

"I think that we shall be able to strike the British a hard blow!" said Sumpter to himself, with a satisfied smile.

## CHAPTER II.

### ANDY PROVES HIMSELF A BRAVE BOY.

The boy who had visited the patriot partisan's camp made his way through the timber at a rapid walk, and fifteen minutes later came to a farmhouse standing in a little valley. This was the home of David Winter, the farmer for whom the boy was working.

The man was out in the barnyard when the boy put in an appearance, and was evidently angry.

"Whur ye be'n?" he asked.

"I've been looking for a good place to fish," was the reply.

"Humph! Hain't ye got nothin' else ter do but fish?"



"Yes; but when I have any time I like to fish, and I have found what I think is a fine place."

"Bah! Fish around fur er bucket and git ter work milkin'."

The boy picked up a pail and went to work. He was used to the grumbings of Dave Winter, and did not pay much attention to what he said.

When the milking was done the two went ahead with the other work, and when the chores were all finished they went to the house and ate supper, which was ready when they got there.

An hour later the family was in bed, for the farmer said he wanted to get an early start next morning.

They were up bright and early, and the man and the boy were hard at work loading the wagon with the produce which it was their intention to take to Hanging Rock to sell to the British.

When this had been finished they went to the house and ate breakfast, after which they went out and harnessed the team and hitched it to the wagon. Then they drove away in the direction of Hanging Rock.

It was a trip of ten miles, and with the loaded wagon this was a three-hour trip. The British encampment was reached at last, however, and the work of selling the produce was begun. At first the work was brisk, for the soldiers were eager to buy, but when the rush subsided somewhat and there was not much doing, the boy climbed down out of the wagon and made his way through the encampment, looking about him curiously. To the casual observer it would have seemed as if the boy was simply satisfying a natural boyish curiosity to see how the soldiers lived in camp, but the fact of the matter was that Andy was making careful observations for future use.

Of course, the redcoats did not suspect, and they spoke to him pleasantly, and some joked him.

"How would you like to be a soldier, sonny?" asked one.

"Oh, I think I would like it, first rate," was the reply.

"Guess you'll have to grow a few inches before you go into the army."

"I suppose so, sir."

Andy told himself that he would have time to grow two or three feet before he would go into the British army.

"Army life isn't very pleasant," the redcoat said.

"Isn't it?"

"No. This is all right, being in camp with nothing to do but take it easy and eat and drink, and laugh and talk; but when the time comes for marching and fighting, it isn't so funny."

"No, I suppose not."

"Here you, Andy!" came to the boy's ears in the voice of Winters, what are you doing? Come along here and help me."

"The captain of your regiment is calling you," said the soldier, smiling.

"Yes; and I have to obey orders the same as you do," replied Andy, with a grin.

"That's the way it goes, my boy; the world is made of two classes, officers and privates; the officers boss and the privates obey orders. That's all there is to it."

Andy hastened back to the wagon, where he was treated to a scolding.

"Where you be'n?" the man growled.

"Oh, just looking around."

"Humph! Whut good d'ye think thet'll do ye?"

"Oh, no good in particular," the boy replied; but himself he said that he thought it might do considerable good when the time came for him to lead the patriotic partisan force to the spot.

"Waal, don' go erway erg'in."

"Very well."

"Ye stay right heer in ther waggin while I go an' see ther colonel of ther regiment."

"All right, sir."

"I wanter see ef he intends ter stay heer very long, so ter know whether I kin count on ther sojers fur customers."

"Yes, sir."

"An' don' let none uv 'em hev ennythin' unless the pays ye fur et, d'ye heer?"

"Yes, sir; I'll see that they don't get any of the stuff without paying for it."

Then Mr. Winters climbed down and walked to a tent which stood at the farther end of the encampment, and entered.

No sooner had the man disappeared from sight than an evil-faced soldier, with the marks of dissipation on his face, approached the wagon.

"Hello, sonny!" he said.

"Good morning," was the reply.

"I'd like to buy some vegetables, my boy."

"Very well, sir; what kinds do you want?"

"Oh, potatoes and cabbage, I guess."

"How much of each?"

"A peck of potatoes and a head of cabbage."

The boy measured out the potatoes and placed them in a bag which the man had brought, and then handed him the head of cabbage.

"Four shillings, please," he said.

The soldier made no reply, but started to walk away.



"Hold on!" cried Andy. "You didn't pay me for the potatoes and cabbage!"

The redcoat stopped and half turned.

"What's that you say?" he asked.

"I say you didn't pay me for those things."

"Yes, I did," the soldier declared.

"I am sorry to dispute your word, sir, but you did not pay me," the boy said, firmly, and a number of soldiers who were within hearing distance drew nearer and the boy, who was a shrewd fellow, was sure that the majority did not believe their comrade had paid.

"That fellow is a robber," the boy said to himself, "and he thinks that as I am only a boy he can get away without paying me for the things."

"Do you mean to say I lie?" cried the soldier, angrily. It was plainly his intention to try to scare the boy.

"I don't say you lie, sir, but I do say that you have not paid for the potatoes and cabbage."

There was an audible snicker from some of the men. They could not help admiring the boy's coolness and grit, and the neat manner in which he had avoided calling the soldier a liar, outright, yet had practically done so, amused them, while at the same time arousing their admiration.

The soldier knew what his comrades were snickering about, and it made him angry. He strode back to the wagon and shook his fist at Andy.

"Don't you dare say that again!" he hissed. "If you do——"

"But I will say it again," said the boy, promptly; "it is the truth, and I have a right to tell the truth. You haven't paid me for the potatoes and cabbage, and I want the money or the things back."

"Oh, you do, eh?"

"Yes."

"Well, I'll tell you what it is, if you weren't a boy I'd kill you; but, as it is, I forgive you and will overlook your insolence. But don't repeat it."

"I want the four shillings, sir."

Andy spoke calmly and firmly.

The soldier glared.

"Go to blazes and get your four shillings!" he growled, and turned on his heel and strode away.

But the redcoat was dealing with a remarkable boy. Andy Jackson, young as he was, did not know the meaning of the word fear, and, moreover, he was a boy who would stand up for his rights as long as he was able to stand at all. In his pocket was a pistol. It was an old, rattle-trap affair, but the boy had used it a good deal, shooting at squirrels and woodchucks, and was a good shot. Acting

on the impulse of the moment he drew the old pistol and leveled it.

"Stop!" he cried, in such tones of command as to cause the redcoat to obey. And when the fellow turned his head and saw himself covered by the pistol in the boy's hand his face paled. He was, like all bullies, a coward, and he was afraid the boy might shoot him.

"W-what d-do y-you m-mean?" he stammered.

"I mean that you must pay me for the potatoes and cabbage."

To say that the spectators were astonished is putting it mildly. They were staring at the boy in open-mouthed amazement. There were no looks of anger to be seen, however. It was evident that the soldier who was trying to secure the vegetables without paying for them was not a favorite.

"B-but I did p-pay you for the things!"

Andy shook his head.

"You did not, and you know it!"

"I laid the money on the side of the wagon bed," said the soldier, his assurance returning to him.

Andy shook his head again.

"I hate to dispute your word," he said, quietly; "but I must say that you are mistaken."

"No, I am not."

"Where is the money now, then?"

"You must have picked it up."

"I did nothing of the kind."

"Then look in the bottom of the wagon-bed; it must have fallen down."

The soldier's purpose was to throw the boy off his guard by getting him to lower his eyes to look for the money, when he would draw his own pistol and turn the tables. But Andy was too smart for that. He knew the fellow was lying, that he had not placed the money on the side of the wagon-bed, and so he did not make any search for the mythical silver pieces. Instead he kept his eyes fixed on the redcoat's face and said, sternly:

"Come, hurry up! I want the pay for the potatoes and cabbage, or I want you to put them back in the wagon."

The soldier was disappointed, and his face showed it. His scheme to get the better of the boy had failed. What should he do? He did not want to give up the vegetables, nor did he wish to pay for them; but there did not seem to be any way of getting out of doing one or the other. He believed the boy would shoot if he tried to make off with the produce without paying for it, for there was something in his eyes that said so very plainly. Finally he turned to his comrades who were standing near:



"Jim," he said to one of them, "lend me four shillings, will you?"

"Look on the ground underneath where you laid the silver pieces, Muggins," was the reply, in a dry tone of voice; "doubtless you will find them."

"Yes, look for them, Muggins!" was the cry, and while he well knew that his comrades did not believe he had placed any silver pieces on the wagon-bed, he was forced, in order to carry the affair out and keep up appearances, to get down and pretend to make a search for the mythical silver pieces.

He did not waste much time, however, and presently arose from his hands and knees and shook his head.

"I can't find them," he said.

"That's too bad, Muggins!" said the one addressed as Jim. His tone was mock sympathetic in the extreme, and his comrades followed his lead and said, "Yes, yes! It's too bad, Muggins!"

"Lend me the four shillings, Jim," said Muggins, who was very angry, but did not dare show it.

"Oh, well, anything to accommodate you, Muggins," said Jim, with a smile; "I must say, however, that the potatoes and cabbage are rather costly, as they cost you four shillings and me four shillings."

"I'll pay the money back," in a growling voice; "it won't cost you anything."

"I hope it will turn out that way."

Tom handed Muggins the silver pieces and the soldier tossed them into the wagon-bed, and, turning on his heel, walked away.

Andy returned the pistol to his pocket just as Mr. Winters returned, and the farmer, noticing the act, asked:

"Whut ye be'n doin' with thet ole pistil, Andy?"

"Been collecting pay for some potatoes and cabbage, sir," was the quiet reply as he stooped and picked up the silver pieces and handed them to the farmer.

The redcoats standing around laughed, and one vouchsafed an explanation.

"Your son is all right, sir," he said; "he made one of our fellows pay for some produce, when he had no intention of paying."

"But this hain't my son," said Mr. Winters.

"Isn't he?"

"No."

"Well, you might well be proud to call him your son. He is a brave boy."

"But ye say he made wun uv your comrades pay fur some produce?" in wondering tones.

"He did that—at the muzzle of his pistol." And then

the soldier went ahead and explained, and he added that Muggins was a dissolute, unreliable fellow, and that he had got only what he deserved.

"He waited till you went away," the soldier further explained, with a smile, "and then thought to get some provisions without paying for them. He supposed he would have no trouble brow-beating the boy into letting him go with the stuff."

"But he caught a Tartar!" remarked another, with a laugh, in which all joined.

Mr. Winters was amazed. "Ye wuz er fool, Andy," he said; "ye might hev got er bullet through ye."

"Well, you left me in charge, with instructions not to let anybody have anything without paying for it, and I was simply doing what you told me to do, sir."

"He was obeying orders, sir," said one of the redcoats; "he would make a great soldier if he was a few years older."

### CHAPTER III.

#### A FUTURE PRESIDENT.

By two o'clock all the produce was disposed of and Mr. Winters and Andy started home. Neither was much of a hand for talking, so not much was said as they rode along. About the only remark made was by Mr. Winters, who suddenly gave utterance to a chuckle, and slapping his pocket till the silver contained therein rattled and jingled, said:

"I got er mighty good price fur my stuff, Andy. I guess ez how't ef ther British stay theer at Hangin' Rock er month, ez they air figgerin' on doin', I'll mighty nigh git rich offen 'em!"

"They have plenty of money to buy provisions with, I guess, sir," the boy replied.

"Yas, they hev thet. They air fixed er leetle diffrent frum whut ther rebel sojers usuerally air."

"You are right about that, too," the boy coincided; "the patriot soldiers don't have much money to spend."

"No, mighty leetle; an' thet's in paper stuff thet hain't wuth ther paper et's writ on."

Andy made no reply, so they rode onward for two hours in silence. Then, while yet two miles from Mr. Winters' home, they were treated to a surprise. They heard the sound of hoofbeats behind them, and, looking back, they saw a party of horsemen approaching. There were at



least a hundred in the party, and they were not redcoats the two knew, for they did not wear the British uniform. Indeed, the horsemen were dressed in the ordinary citizen's clothing of the day, and as they drew nearer it was seen that they were young fellows of an average age of perhaps nineteen or twenty years.

"Who'n blazes kin they be?" said the farmer, in a low voice.

"I don't know," replied the boy.

"I'll bet they air rebels!"

"What makes you think so?"

"Oh, I dunno; they look like rebels, I think."

"They are rather bright-looking fellows."

"Mostly young chaps, hain't they?"

"Yes."

By this time the party of horsemen was close at hand, and a few moments later the horsemen were on both sides of the wagon. They had been riding at a gallop, but now they slowed down to a walk, and one who seemed to be the leader looked at the farmer keenly and asked:

"Do you live in these parts, sir?"

"Yas," was the reply. Mr. Winters was eyeing the horsemen, searchingly and curiously, and so answered as briefly as possible.

"How far from here do you live?"

"'Bout two miles."

"Straight ahead?"

"Yas."

"How are things in these parts—quiet?"

"Waal, yes, purty quiet."

"Tories and rebels fighting each other much?"

"No, not so very much."

"That's good; it is a bad thing for neighbors to fall out and fight each other just because they have a little different idea regarding how the Government should be run."

"Yas, yer right; but theer hain't very menny rebels in these parts."

"Oh, there aren't?"

"No; the people is mostly loyal ter ther king."

"I suppose you are a loyalist, then?"

Mr. Winters twisted about on the seat and looked uncomfortable.

"Waal, ye see et's this heer way," he said, after a few moments, during which time he had run his eyes over the faces of the horsemen nearest the wagon: "I don' jes' know whur I do stan' on this heer question."

"So that's it? You are neutral, then?"

"Yas, thet's et; I'm nootral."

"Well, in that case, perhaps you will have no objection to giving me some information."

"Ef I kin do et, mister."

"I wish to know if you have lately seen any rebel partisan forces in this part of the country?"

"Ye mean gangs like Sumpter's er Pickens' er Marion's?"

"Yes."

The farmer shook his head.

"No, I hain't seen none uv 'em."

Andy, as may well be supposed, was taking everything in. He was sure that the strangers were patriots, and he would have been glad to tell the young leader that he knew where there was a patriot partisan force, but he did not wish to do so, for he was well aware that Mr. Winters had lied when he said he was neutral; he was a Tory, and a strong one at that, and the boy did not wish him to know that there was a patriot force in the neighborhood, for the very good reason that he knew the man would carry the information straight to the redcoats on the morrow when he went there with produce.

"I must manage, somehow, to let this young fellow know, however," the boy said to himself.

"Have you heard of any such parties having been in this locality recently?" the young stranger asked.

"No, I hain't heerd tell uv enny sech parties bein' in ther localerty, mister."

"What is your name?" was the next question.

"Dave Winters, mister."

"Very well, Mr. Winters; would you object to our camping near your home and staying over night? Our horses have been ridden hard and far and are tired, and so are we, for that matter."

Now, the farmer would much rather the strangers would go on their way, but of course he did not think it best to say so, so he made a virtue of what he considered to be necessity, and said that he would be glad to have them camp near his house.

"Thank you, sir; and if you have some extra provisions in the way of meat or vegetables, or both, we shall be glad to have them and will pay you your own price."

"I guess I kin spar' ye er liddle sumthin'," said Mr. Winters, but there was not much cordiality in the tone.

There was no more conversation for several minutes, and then the farmer asked:

"Who may ye fellers be, sir, ef I hain't axin' too much?"

"Oh, we are a party of young fellows who thought we would take a trip just to have some sport," was the careless



reply. It was evident that the young man was not going to give much in the way of real information.

"I'll wager they are patriots!" said Andy to himself. "Oh, I hope so!"

The house came in sight, just then, and Mr. Winters pointed to it and said:

"Thar's whur I liv'."

"Ah, that's where you live, eh?" the young leader of the party remarked.

"Yas."

They were soon at the house and the farmer, while waiting for Andy to open the gate to let him drive into the barnyard, said:

"Thar's er leetle brook erbout two hunderd yards down ther road, an' thar's plenty uv nice grass thar. I hev a idee ye'd like et fur er campin' place."

"Thank you," was the reply; "we'll go and take a look. I think likely, from your description, that it will be just the place for us."

The horsemen rode onward down the road till they came to the brook, and as the timber was open and the ground was carpeted with grass it was decided that the place would do splendidly for a camp. This having been settled the youths leaped to the ground and proceeded to unbridle and unsaddle the horses. This done the animals were led down to the brook and allowed to drink, and then they were tied with long ropes which allowed them plenty of room to graze.

Meantime Mr. Winters and Andy were engaged in unhitching and putting their horses in the stable. And while so engaged they were talking.

"Whut d'ye think uv them fellers, Andy?" the man asked.

"How do you mean, sir?" was the reply.

"I mean, who an' whut d'ye think they air?"

"I don't know."

"They air strangers in these parts."

"Yes, so they are."

"I never seen er wun uv 'em afore in all my life, an' I've lived heer fur yeers, an' know all ther peepel whut lives in fifteen miles uv heer."

"Oh, I guess they are strangers, sir."

"Yas, thar hain't no doubt erbout et; an' d'ye know, Andy," lowering his voice, "I berleeve they air rebels!"

The boy pretended to be surprised. He was sure the young strangers were patriots, but he did not want Mr. Winters to think that he suspected it.

"What makes you think so, sir?" he asked.

"Oh, sev'ral things. Fur wun thing, they hain't got

no uniforms, so thet makes me know they hain't British soldiers."

"Yes."

"An' ef ye notussed, ther feller didn' hev much ter say erbout 'imself."

"You are right; he didn't have much to say."

"No; an' I'll bet ther fellers air rebels!"

"It may be as you say; but still they may be neutral and not rebels or loyalists either."

"I don't think thet; but say, Andy."

"Well?"

"How would ye like ter try ter fin' out fur shore erbout ther fellers?"

"I don't know; how could I do it?"

"W'y, ye could go down thar an' tork ter 'em. I don't think they would be suspishus uv ye, er boy, an' they might say sumthin' ez'd tell ye whut they air."

"Yes, you are right; that might work," Andy admitted. The truth was that this was exactly what he wished to do. Had Mr. Winters not suggested it he would have done it, anyway, but would have waited till after dark and kept the matter a secret from the farmer; but now he could go openly, and while the farmer would think he was going to try to find out about the strangers in order to secure the information for him, the boy would, in reality, be furthering his own plans by first finding out whether or not the strangers were patriots, and then if they were to tell them that Sumpter, the partisan leader, and his men were in camp not two miles distant.

"I think et'll work, all right," said the farmer; "I want ye ter try et, ennyhow."

"All right."

"Ef them fellers is rebels I wanter know et."

"Of course; and so do I."

"Ef they air rebels, w'y, I'll try ter git ther news ter ther British at Hangin' Rock, an' then they kin send sum men heer an' attack ther strangers."

"Yes; but how could you get the information to the British?"

"Send et."

"Who by?"

"W'y, you, of course."

"Oh, yes, you could do that. Well, I'll go down to the strangers' camp, pretty soon, and see if I can learn anything."

"Go right erlong, now; I'll 'tend ter ther hosses."

"Very well, sir."

The boy left the stable and made his way toward the



camp down by the brook. It did not take him long to reach there, and he was greeted pleasantly by the young strangers.

He made his way to where the young man who seemed to be the leader was standing, and said:

"Are you the commander here, sir?"

The young man looked at Andy, searchingly, and seemed to be reading him through and through.

"Yes, I'm the leader of this party," he replied; "what can I do for you?"

The boy looked around at the young men and then said:

"Are you patriots?"

"Why do you ask?" was the counter-question.

"I have a reason, and a good one."

"That may be, but you are asking a leading question, my boy. You know these are troublous times."

"Yes, I know that; but you asked that man I was with if he had seen or heard of any partisan patriot force being in this locality recently. Why did you wish to know that?"

The stranger laughed.

"I had my reasons for wishing to know," he replied.

Andy stood for a few moments and gazed straight into the young man's eyes. A few moments he did this and then he said, abruptly:

"I am a patriot."

The young man started and looked surprised.

"But your father said he is neutral," he remarked, in surprise.

"That man isn't my father."

"Oh, he isn't?"

"No, sir; I have no parents. I am working for him, that is all."

"Then while he is neutral you are an out and out patriot, eh?" eyeing the boy with a look of interest.

"He isn't neutral, sir," the boy said, quietly.

"He isn't?" in surprise.

"No."

"What is he, then—a patriot like you?"

"No, he is a Tory."

"Ah, he's a Tory, is he?"

"Yes."

"Then I suppose he feared we were patriots and that was the reason he said he was neutral."

"Yes, sir, that was the reason. And now, sir, that you know I am a patriot, will you tell me whether or not you are patriots?"

"I will," was the prompt reply; "I like your looks, my boy, and I am going to be frank and honest with you. But first, what is your name?"

"Andy Jackson."

"Andy Jackson, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

The mention of the name told the other nothing, at the time, nor did it cause any feeling of wonder or surprise; but at the same time the young stranger was talking to one who was destined to take a prominent part in the destinies of the country when it had been freed from British rule. The young stranger was talking to a future President of the United States.

## CHAPTER IV.

### ANDY AND THE "LIBERTY BOYS."

"Very well, Andy," said the young stranger; "I will now keep my promise and will say that we are patriots."

A look of delight appeared on the boy's face.

"I was sure you were patriots," he said; "and I'm glad that you are, and that you have come along just at this time."

"Why so?" eagerly.

"For the reason that there is work for patriots, work that is to be done soon, and you can assist in doing it."

"Tell me what you mean, Andy?"

The boy hesitated and looked at the young stranger, searchingly.

"Would you mind telling me who you and your men really are, sir?" he asked, hesitatingly.

"I have no objection to telling you, my boy," was the reply. "Have you ever heard of 'The Liberty Boys of '76'?"

An eager light appeared in the eyes of the boy.

"Indeed I have!" he exclaimed. "Do you really mean to tell me that these are the 'Liberty Boys'?" with a sweep of the hand to indicate the youths.

The young man nodded.

"Those are 'The Liberty Boys,'" he replied.

"Then you—are you, can it be possible that you are—are—Dick Slater?" The boy's eyes shone eagerly as he asked the question.

"That is my name," with a smile; "yes, I am Dick Slater."

Andy stepped forward and extended his hand.

"Will you shake hands with me, Dick Slater?" he asked.

"Certainly I will!" with a smile, and the youth, who was indeed the famous scout, spy and fighter, shook the boy's hand heartily.



"I have heard of you and your 'Liberty Boys' many times, sir," said Andy, "but I never expected to get to see you."

"We were sent down here by General Washington," Dick explained; "he wishes us to co-operate with Sumpter, Marion, Pickens and the other partisan leaders, and help them make things hot for the redcoats."

"I see; well, you will have a chance to do that, right away."

"Is that so?"

"Yes, sir."

"How is that?"

"It is this way: About ten miles from here—at a point called Hanging Rock, a regiment of British is stationed."

The young "Liberty Boy" looked interested.

"Indeed! Do you know this to be true, my boy?"

"Yes, sir; we were coming home from there when you overtook us."

"You were?"

"Yes."

"Why had you been there?"

"Mr. Winters had taken a load of produce to the encampment and sold it to the redcoats."

"I see."

"Yes; but I have some more information for you."

"Go ahead and give it to me, Andy."

"You asked Mr. Winters if he had seen or heard of a party of partisan patriots, didn't you?" The boy made this as a statement of fact.

"I did."

"He told you that he had neither seen nor heard of any such party being in the vicinity."

"So he did."

"Well, he told the truth—he has not seen or heard of any such party." Andy accented "he" in a peculiar manner and Dick understood.

"You mean that you have seen or heard of such a party, my boy?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, I have seen such a party."

"Good!" exclaimed Dick, eagerly. "When did you see the party in question?"

"Yesterday evening."

"Where?"

"Not two miles from here."

"So close as that?"

"Yes."

"Have you any idea whose party it was?"

"Yes."

"Whose?"

"Sumpter's."

"Sumpter's, eh? Good! Jove! I wish I knew where his party is now!"

"It is right where it was yesterday evening, sir," the boy hastened to say.

"It is?" in surprise.

"Yes."

"How do you know?"

"I know because General Sumpter said he was going to stay there. He told me to do some spying when at the British camp to-day, and then come to his encampment to-night and report to him."

"Ah! so that is the way of it, eh?"

"Yes."

"Jove! that is glorious news! Andy, you are a trump! Boys, come here and let me make you acquainted with the smartest boy in the South!"

"You had better be careful, Mr. Slater," said the boy; "Mr. Winters sent me here to try to find out who you are so as to send word to the British if I learned that you are patriots, and he may be watching to see how I am coming on. It will be best if they don't seem to be too friendly."

"All right; that is well said," and then Dick explained the situation to the "Liberty Boys," who without making any motions that would indicate to any one looking that they were greeting the boy cordially, yet told him so in words that were sincere.

"You're a trump, sure enough, Andy Jackson!" said Bob Estabrook. "And some time, when that old Tory isn't looking, we'll give you a hearty handshake."

After this was over Dick resumed the conversation.

"When will you visit Sumpter's camp?" he asked.

"About ten o'clock to-night."

"After Mr. Winters has gone to sleep, eh?"

"Yes."

"Will you come past our camp? I wish to accompany you."

"Certainly I will."

"Very well; I will be on the lookout for you and will be ready to go right along, so there won't be any delay."

"Very well, Mr. Slater."

"What will you tell Mr. Winters when you go back to the house?"

"I'll tell him that I couldn't find out anything about you."

"Ah, yes; that will be the best plan."

After some further conversation Andy went back to the house.



"Waal, whut did ye fin' out?" asked Mr. Winters, eyeing Andy closely.

"I didn't find out anything."

"Ye didn'?"

"No."

"W'y didn' ye?"

"Because I couldn't get them to talk about themselves."

"Ye couldn', hey?"

"No."

"Waal, thet's funny; wuz they suspishus uv ye, d'ye think?"

"I don't know; I only know that I couldn't get them to talk about themselves or their plans."

"Humph!"

Presently Dick and a dozen or more of the "Liberty Boys" came to the house, and after some discussion regarding prices, procured and paid for some meat, potatoes, cabbages and other things. These things they carried back to the camp and then they busied themselves getting supper.

They had just finished eating when Mr. Winters, who had eaten his supper, put in an appearance. He engaged Dick in conversation and did his best to worm some information out of him, but the youth knew what the farmer was up to and gave him no satisfaction.

"You old scoundrel!" said Dick to himself, "you'd like to learn something about us and then carry the information to the British, wouldn't you? But you won't succeed."

Mr. Winters returned to the house half an hour later, in anything but a good humor.

"Did you learn anything?" asked Andy, who knew what the farmer had been trying to do.

"Not er blamed thing, Andy."

"I didn't think you would."

"Ye didn', hey?"

"No; they are so close-mouthed about themselves and their affairs."

"Waal, yer right erbout thet; they air clost-mouthed enuff, an' thet's er fack."

"Yes, they don't have anything to say about themselves."

"No; they-wuz mighty willin' ter tork erbout farmin', an' ever'thin' like thet, but they wouldn' say who they wuz nur whur they cum frum, nur whur they intended ter go, nur nothin'."

"You are right; but I guess they are just a party traveling through the country to see what they can see."

The farmer shook his head doubtfully.

"I dunno 'bout thet," he said; "in my 'pinion them fellers air up ter sumthin'."

Andy did all he could to disabuse the man of this idea,

for he was afraid Mr. Winters might want him to go to Hanging Rock and warn the British. The man did not say anything about sending Andy, however, and the boy thought he was not going to do anything.

Andy went to bed in the room which he occupied, upstairs, as soon as it had become dark, and when he had done so the farmer said to his wife:

"Marthy, I berleeve them fellers down by ther brook air rebels!"

"Goodness, Dave! D'ye reelly think so?" the woman exclaimed.

"Yas, I do."

"Thet's turrible! W'y, they may murder us ter-night, er burn us outer house an' home!"

"Thet's right, Marthy!"

"Whut'll we do, Dave?"

"I'll tell ye whut I've be'n thinkin' uv doin', Marthy," the man lowered his voice and looked cautiously around him as if he feared the walls had ears.

"Whut, Dave?"

"I've be'n thinkin' uv goin' ter Hangin' Rock an' tellin' ther British theer erbout these heer fellers."

"An' whut would ther British do?"

"They'd probberly send er force heer an' make ther young fellers pris'ners."

"Waal, I think thet is er good idee; but w'y don' ye send Andy?"

"I don' think I hed better. Ther boy might not know jes' whut ter say er do, an' so I guess I'll go myse'f. I'm kinder suspishus, ennyhow, Marthy, thet Andy hain't ez loyal ter ther king ez he might be."

"D'ye reelly think so, Dave?"

"Waal, I've heerd 'im say sum things thet didn' soun' jes' ez loyal as they hed orter."

"Goodness! I wouldn' hev ther boy aroun' ef I thort he wuzn't loyal ter ther king! I hates rebels."

"Waal, I'm not shore thet Andy's er rebel, but neether am I shore he is loyal, so I guess ther bes' thing I kin do is ter go ter Hangin' Rock myse'f an' take ther news ter ther British. Et'll make 'em feel frien'ly ter me, ye know, Marthy, an' ez I wanter sell our produce ter 'em, et'll be er good stroke uv bizness on my part."

"Thet's so; I didn' think uv thet."

"I did," with a grin; "I tell ye, I'm allers a-thinkin', Marthy!"

"When ye goin' ter start?"

"I'll wait erbout an hour ter make shore thet Andy is ersleep."

"How ye goin'?"



"On hossback."

Half an hour later the farmer left the house and made his way to the stable, where he bridled and saddled a horse. Leading the animal out and to the road, he gave a glance in the direction of the encampment down by the brook, saw that all was quiet, and, mounting, rode away.

He had been observed, however. Andy, of course, had not gone to bed. He was wide awake and was sitting by the window. His room was at the rear, and when he heard the sound of the opening and closing of the rear door he glanced out of the window. It was not so dark but that he could distinguish objects with tolerable distinctness, and he saw Mr. Winters go to the stable.

There was a shed kitchen on the north side of the house, and the sloping roof was right under the window at which Andy was sitting. He did not hesitate an instant. Raising the window he climbed softly through, lowered the window again and then making his way down to the edge of the roof, leaped to the ground. As it was only about seven feet to the ground he was not shaken up by the jar.

Andy hastened to where a tree stood, about halfway from the house to the stable, and hiding behind the tree he kept his eyes on the stable door. Five minutes passed and then he saw Mr. Winters emerge, leading a horse, bridled and saddled.

"Now what does that mean?" the boy asked himself.

He watched the man eagerly and interestedly, and saw him lead the horse to the road, mount and ride away, and then of a sudden the thought of what it meant came to him.

"He is going to Hanging Rock to tell the British about the presence of the 'Liberty Boys'!" Andy exclaimed to himself. "We must not let him do that. We must stop him in some way, and I will go and tell Dick Slater at once!"

Then Andy hastened in the direction of the "Liberty Boys' " encampment.

He found Dick Slater, Bob Estabrook and several of the youths sitting just within the range of the light thrown out by a small camp-fire, and when Dick saw the haste with which the boy approached he suspected that something had happened, and leaping up, cried:

"What is the matter, Andy? What has happened?"

## CHAPTER V.

DICK AND SUMPTER.

The boy hastened to explain that Mr. Winters had mounted a horse and ridden away, and gave it as his be-

lief that the man was bound for Hanging Rock to carry the information regarding the presence of the youths to the British.

"That is just what he is going to do!" agreed Dick.

"If he isn't prevented from doing so," said Bob Estabrook, significantly.

"That's it!" exclaimed Andy, excitedly. "You can prevent him from reaching Hanging Rock."

"He has been gone only a few minutes, you say, Andy?" remarked Dick.

"Only a few minutes, Dick. I came right down here as soon as I saw him ride away."

"How is the horse he is riding—a pretty fast one?"

"Not very; he's a work-horse and is not very good under the saddle."

"Then we can easily overtake the man before he goes far."

"Yes, if you have any very good saddle horses."

"We have some splendid ones. Bob, take three of the boys and go after the man. Bring him here when you get him."

"All right, Dick."

Five minutes later Bob Estabrook and three comrades rode out of the encampment and up the road at a gallop. They rode faster and faster, and twenty minutes later they overtook Mr. Winters. They rode right up alongside the man and ordered him to stop. He obeyed at once, for he was frightened.

"W-what do y-you want?" he stammered.

"We want you," was the prompt reply.

"Y-you want m-me?"

"Yes."

"What for?"

"We want you to go with us."

"Whur to?"

"Oh, back down the road a ways."

"B-back?"

"Yes."

"Whut fur?"

"You'll find out in good time. Turn your horse and ride quietly along with us and you will be all right; try any tricks and it will go hard with you, for we are men who won't be trifled with!"

Bob spoke sternly, and the farmer was impressed with the idea that it would be dangerous to attempt resistance or to try to get away.

"If you don't choose to obey us we will bind your arms and take you with us in that fashion," said Bob; "take your choice."



"Oh, I'll go erlong uv ye without enny uv thet," was reply.

"That is sensible, Mr. Winters."

The five turned their horses and rode back in the direction from which they had just come. It was evident that the prisoner was greatly worried.

"I don't see whut right ye hev ter interfeer with er n in this fashion," he grumbled.

"Oh, we have the right to do so," said Bob.

"I kain't see et in thet way. I sh'd think thet er man'd y er right ter go an' come ez he pleases."

"Well, you see, that depends on where he is going and at he is going there for," remarked Bob.

"Waal, I wuz jes' ergoin' ter my brother's house, three les frum heer."

"Oh, you were?"

"Yas."

"What were you going to your brother's house for?"

"I wanted ter see 'im on some bizness."

"Oh, that was it?"

"Yas."

"Well, I'm sorry, but you will have to put off the trip a while."

Of course, Bob did not believe the man's statement that was going to see his brother, but he did not think it worth while telling him so.

The return trip was made at a moderate pace, and half an hour later the party arrived at the encampment. The farmer asked to be allowed to stop at his house, but was refused the privilege.

Andy was nowhere to be seen. He had hidden, as he did not wish Mr. Winters to know that he was responsible for the trouble that had fallen upon the man. Dick advanced and faced the farmer.

"Well, Mr. Winters," said the youth, gravely and somewhat sternly, "what do you mean by such action as you've taken to-night?"

"Whut d'ye mean?" Winters asked.

"I mean why were you slipping away on horseback in such a silent and mysterious manner?"

"I wuz goin' ter see my brother, whut lives five miles o ther road."

The youth shook his head.

"You cannot deceive me, Mr. Winters; you were going Hanging Rock."

"Ter—Hangin' Rock!" in a gasping voice.

"Yes; you were going to go there and tell the British our being here. Is it not so?"

"No, no!" Winters protested. "I wusn't goin' ter

Hangin' Rock, an' I hed no idee uv tellin' ther British ennythin'."

"I'm very sorry, but I cannot believe you," said Dick; "and in order to make sure that you do not do anything of the kind, we will have to hold you here a prisoner."

"Hol' me heer er pris'ner!" The man gasped the words out, so great was his consternation.

"Exactly."

"Hol' me er pris'ner within two hundred yards uv my own house?"

"Yes."

"But w'y not let me go ter ther house?"

"For the reason that I can't trust you. You might start out again and go to Hanging Rock."

"But I won't do et. I giv' ye my word I won't do nothin' uv ther kin'."

"I'm sorry, Mr. Winters, but I cannot permit you to return to your house."

"Waal, how long ye goin' ter keep me er pris'ner?"

"I cannot say; perhaps only through the night."

Then the farmer was bound to a tree and Dick left the encampment. He walked across the road and entered the timber, and was there joined by Andy Jackson.

"They caught him, I see," said the boy.

"Yes; we will hold him a prisoner till after the attack has been made on the British, and then we will set him free, as I have no wish to hurt him."

Then the two set out through the timber, the boy leading the way, and after a walk of twenty-five minutes they emerged from the timber into the little glen in which Sumpter and his men had their encampment.

They were still there, and the boy led the way across to where Sumpter sat looking over some papers by the light of the camp-fire.

He looked up as the two approached, and as he recognized the boy he nodded and said:

"Ah, Andy, is it you? I'm glad to see you. But who have you there?" with a penetrating glance at Dick.

"My name is Slater, General Sumpter—Dick Slater—and I am the captain of the company of youths known as 'The Liberty Beys of '76.' Perhaps you have heard of them."

"Indeed I have!" exclaimed the partisan leader, leaping up and extending his hand, which Dick grasped and shook heartily; "I have heard of you many times, and I am indeed glad to meet you. But what are you doing down in this part of the country, if I may ask?"

"General Washington sent me down here to co-operate with you, Marion, Pickens and the other partisan leaders,



and do what is possible for the betterment of the patriot settlers in these parts."

"Good! I'm glad to hear that. Then your 'Liberty Boys' are down here?"

"Yes, sir; we are encamped about a mile and a half from here, close to the house where Andy is staying."

"I am very glad to hear that, Mr. Slater, for I am now making arrangements to attack a force of British at Hanging Rock, and you can render me a great deal of aid in the matter."

"Andy told me about it, and that is the reason I came to see you."

"Andy is a valuable man for us, Captain Slater." Then to the boy he said:

"You went to Hanging Rock to-day with the man you are working for?"

"Yes, sir."

"And did you take note of everything as I told you to do?"

"Yes, sir; I walked all around the encampment and took careful note of everything."

"Good! Tell me all about it."

Andy did so, Sumpter and Dick both listening with interest. When the boy had finished his description of the location of the British encampment, and the disposition of the soldiers, the two hearers looked at each other and nodded approvingly.

"You have done well, Andy," said Sumpter; "from your description I shall be able to know just what directions to approach from and where to strike the British."

"You have a good eye, my boy," said Dick; "and a good comprehension of what is needed in a case of this kind."

Andy flushed with pleasure. He was a modest boy, but at the same time he was glad to know that his work was appreciated.

"I hope the attack will turn out to be a success," he said.

"I have no doubt about it now that Captain Slater and his 'Liberty Boys' are here to render assistance," said Sumpter; "I was feeling a bit blue before you came, for I sent a messenger yesterday evening with instructions to find General Marion and get back here with the 'Swamp Fox' and his men this evening, and they have not come."

"Perhaps the messenger had hard work finding Marion," suggested Dick.

"Likely; the Swamp Fox moves around so swiftly that it is hard work keeping track of him."

Just then the sentinel was heard hail some one, and a few minutes later a party of horsemen rode into the en-

campment. There were perhaps a hundred of them, and they were roughly dressed men like Sumpter's, wearing squirrel-caps, with the exception of the leader, who wore a hat.

"There is Marion and his men!" exclaimed Sumpter joyfully. "Good! we will strike the redcoats a blow they won't forget in a hurry!"

He hastened across to where the newcomers were, greeted Marion warmly. The two were warm friends, had worked together on many occasions. Dick had known Marion before and was greeted warmly by the "Swamp Fox."

"Have you your men with you, Dick?" he asked.

"Yes," the youth replied.

"That is good; Sumpter, we are in luck, for the 'Liberty Boys' are allies that are worth while!"

"That is what I know, Marion," was the reply; "we will have some work ahead and will need all the assistance we can get."

"That reminds me, Sumpter, that Pickens and his men will be here by morning, if you can wait for them."

"Pickens and his men? Of course I'll wait for them. Ah, with such a force we will be able to strike the British a blow that will be remembered for a long time!"

The two generals and Dick held a council, and it was decided to wait for Pickens and his men and start as soon as they put in an appearance. Dick told of the capture of Mr. Winters, and Marion and Sumpter were both of the opinion that he had been on his way to Hanging Rock to warn the British, and that it would be necessary to keep him prisoner till after the forces were on their way to attack the British.

After some further conversation Dick and Andy made their departure and returned to the vicinity of the encampment of the "Liberty Boys." Not wishing to let Mr. Winters know that he was concerned in the matter of the "Liberty Boys," Andy bade Dick good-night and went to the house and climbed up on the shed roof and got into his room and lay down and went to sleep, while Sumpter made his way to the encampment and turned in.

## CHAPTER VI.

### A GREAT VICTORY.

Mrs. Winters was in a terrible stew next morning when Andy came in from the stable, after having done the morning chores.



"Where is Mr. Winters?" asked Andy, innocently.

"Whut d'ye wanter know fur?" was the counter-question.

"I wanted to tell him that there has been a horse thief around."

"Er hoss thief!—what d'ye mean?"

"Why, one of the horses—Bob, the best one of all—is missing."

"I know thet," said the woman; "Dave rid 'im erway las' night."

"He did?" exclaimed Andy, simulating surprise successfully.

"Yas."

"Where did he go?"

"W'y, he took er noshun he wanted ter see his brother im erbout sumthin', an' he went out an' got on Bob and rid erway las' night, an' he hain't cum back yit."

"Oh, that's it? Did you expect him back last night?"

"Yas, I s'posed he'd cum right back."

"Oh, well, he'll be here soon, no doubt."

"I hope so." There was considerable uneasiness in the tone of the woman's voice.

"Why, nothing could have happened to him so you needn't be uneasy," said the boy; "his brother persuaded him to stay all night, and he'll be here directly."

"Mebby so; waal, breakfast is red dy."

The two sat down and ate breakfast and had just finished, when the woman, happening to look out of the window, gave utterance to a cry of surprise and consternation.

"Look, Andy!" she cried. "Who air all them men, an' whur hev they cum frum?"

The boy looked out and saw the road in front of the house filled with the partisan soldiers belonging to Sumpter's, Marion's and Pickens' forces, and there, too, were the "Liberty Boys."

"Goodness! there are a lot of them, aren't there?" exclaimed the boy.

"Yas, an'—look theer! Ez I liv', ef theer hain't Dave Winters—an' his arms air tied, too! He's er pris'ner, thet's whut he is. Now I know why he didn't git back hum las' night."

Sure enough, it was as she had said; Dave Winters was there, and his arms were bound. And when his wife came running out to him, with questions as to how it all happened, he told her; though, of course, he did not know that Andy was responsible for it all. While they were conversing, Andy got a chance to speak to General Sumpter.

"You go on," he said, "and I will follow and overtake you. I don't want Mr. Winters to know I had anything

to do with this affair, and I will make some excuse for following you."

"All right, Andy," was the reply; and then the order was given for the combined forces to move forward. They started at once, leaving Mr. Winters behind with his wife and Andy. Dick gave him some terse advice, however.

"Don't attempt to follow us," he said; "for if you do we will shoot you on sight!"

Mrs. Winters untied the rope binding her husband's arms, and then they looked after the partisan force and discussed the meaning of the strange affair.

"What do you think they are going to do, Dave?" asked Mrs. Winters.

"I think they air goin' ter go ter Hangin' Rock an' make an attack onter ther British theer, Marthy," was the reply.

"D'ye reelly think so, Dave?"

"Yas, I do."

"Goodness! et'll be dre'dful ef they happen ter take ther king's soldiers by s'prise, won't et?"

"Yas, et'll be bad."

"Ef ye c'u'd on'y git theer erhead uv 'em an' warn ther British, Dave!"

The man shook his head and looked ruefully at the black and blue stripes around his wrists—caused by the ropes with which he had been bound.

"I don' wanter take enny chances, Marthy," he said; "I got inter trubble by tryin' thet game, wunst, an' I don' think I care ter resk et erg'in."

This was Andy's opportunity, and he hastened to embrace it.

"Let me go, Mr. Winters," he said, eagerly.

The farmer looked at the boy dubiously.

"D'ye think ye c'u'd git theer erhead uv 'em, Andy?" he asked.

"I don't know; I could try."

"Let 'im go, Dave," said the woman; "mebby he kin git theer erhead uv 'em, an' ef he kin he'll be payin' ther rebels off fur whut they done ter ye."

This decided the man.

"Thet's so," he agreed; "waal, ye kin go, Andy—an' I hope ye'll git theer in time!"

"So do I," replied Andy; but he did not mean that he would get to Hanging Rock in time to warn the British. What he meant was that he hoped he would get there in time to take part in the fight against the redcoats.

He mounted the horse and rode away, following in the wake of the patriot force; but he went slowly till he was out of sight from the house, and then he urged the horse



to a gallop and rode as fast as he could make the horse go. Even then it was half an hour before he came up with the patriot force.

"So you have caught up with us, eh?" remarked Dick as the boy rode up beside him.

"Yes," with a smile of satisfaction, "I'm here."

"What excuse did you make to Mr. Winters?"

"I told him I would try to get to Hanging Rock ahead of you and warn the British of your coming."

"Ah! And then he was willing to let you come, eh?"

"Yes; he feels angry at you and would like to cheat you of your expected victory over the redcoats."

"I understand."

Sumpter saw the boy and motioned for him to come forward, and Andy rode forward and took up a position beside the general's horse.

Sumpter asked the boy a number of questions regarding the position of the soldiers in the British encampment, and after he had asked all the questions he cared to the partisan leader dropped his eyes and pondered long and earnestly.

He was laying out the plan of campaign, and the results proved that he did it well.

Onward rode the patriots, and two hours later they came to a stop at a point a little less than a mile from Hanging Rock. Here they dismounted, and leading their horses deep into the woods, tied them. Then Sumpter told his plans.

He had decided to attack the British from all four sides at once, and to this end he divided the force up into four parties. He was to command his own men, Marion his, Pickens his and Dick Slater was to command the "Liberty Boys." Pickens was to come down from the north, the "Liberty Boys" from the east, while Marion would approach from the south, and Sumpter himself would attack from the west.

It was a splendid scheme, and all were confident that if the British were taken by surprise it would be possible to almost grind them to pieces.

When all the details of the plan had been discussed the different parties set out and made their way to their stations. The length of time it would take them to get there had been calculated and no move was made until twice as long a time had elapsed as would be required. By waiting so long there would be absolute certainty that all the parties would be ready for work when the signal was given.

Sumpter, after waiting the required time, advanced toward the British encampment from the west. On this side of the encampment was a high ridge or bluff, and when

he came to the point where he could look down upon the British, Sumpter paused and took an observation.

So far as he could make out the redcoats were not suspecting anything. They were lying around on blankets smoking, talking and enjoying themselves; others were playing cards, while a few were strolling around.

"Good!" said Sumpter to himself; "we have them at our mercy, and may now be enabled to avenge the death of many of the patriot people of this section!"

He waited till sure that the other three parties had crept up to within range of the encampment, and then drew his pistol and fired a shot.

The redcoats leaped to their feet in alarm, but too late to do them any good, for at that instant a roar of musketry went up from four sides at once and scores of them were cut down.

Crash! crash! crash!

Roar! roar! roar!

Volley after volley was poured in upon the British, and they became so demoralized that they did not know what to do, but stood huddled together like frightened animals when standing at bay.

Then as the volleys ceased for an instant a voice was heard cry out:

"Charge! Charge, patriots, and wipe the redcoats off the face of the earth!"

Instantly, with wild yells, the patriot soldiers dashed forward, coming from all sides, and although the redcoats made an attempt at resistance it was but a feeble effort, and they were cut down and bayoneted like sheep.

Shrieks, yells and curses went up on the air, but still the work went on. The redcoats had been merciless in scores of instances while dealing with patriot settlers of the South, and the partisan patriots remembered this and cut their enemies down without mercy. They had come there for the purpose of exterminating the redcoat regiment, and they had already almost succeeded.

And in the thick of the battle, fighting like a veteran was little Andy Jackson. He had taken a great liking to Dick Slater and the "Liberty Boys," and had stayed with them when they started to take up their position on the east side of the British encampment. Dick had expostulated with the boy and had done his best to persuade him to stay back and be a spectator, but Andy would not hear to this.

"I want to be in the fight," he had said, eagerly; and no amount of persuasion or argument could move him to change his plans. Seeing that the boy was determined to be in the fight, Dick had finally given up and consented



let him stay with them, but told him to stay well at the rear of the party. This the boy had done until after the charge was ordered, and then he had worked his way pretty well forward, and finally got hold of a musket that had been the property of a redcoat, and then he fought like a little demon and did as good work as any one. Dick encountered him once, while the fight was in full blast, and told him he had better fall back more to the rear, but the boy shook his head and plunged forward into the thickest of the fray.

"That boy has the heart of a warrior!" said Dick to himself. "Well, I hope he escapes being killed."

Still the battle raged, but it was nearing the end. The British saw that they were in a trap, and that there was no chance to make a successful fight, and they fled for their lives. Some escaped, of course, but the majority fell, either dead or wounded.

Those of the British who succeeded in breaking through the line and getting away were let go; they were not pursued, for the work was deemed to be thorough enough as it was.

And indeed it was thorough. Of all the encounters between the partisan patriots and the British, this one at Hanging Rock may be considered as having been the most thorough and conclusive one; for the British were practically exterminated.

After it was all over and an account was taken of the casualties among the allied forces, it was found that they had lost only eight men. Of these three were from Sumpter's force, two from Pickens', two from Marion's and one from the "Liberty Boys."

It was a grand victory, and the patriots were delighted. Little Andy Jackson was given a lot of credit for the affair, for he had given the information which led to the victory, and the manner in which he had fought brought him a great deal of praise, too, and as luck would have it he had escaped being even wounded. While they were still engaged in looking over the ground and discussing the battle, a scout brought the word that a large British force was coming down from the north and Sumpter at once gave the order that the allied forces retreat.

"We will return to where our horses are," he said; "and will leave scouts here in this vicinity to spy on the British; if they are not too strong we may attack them."

"I think you will find them too strong, sir," said the scout who had brought the news; "it looks almost as if the entire British army was coming."

The patriots quickly vacated the spot and made their

way back to where they had left their horses, but several scouts were left to spy on the British that were coming.

"We'll wait here till we hear some reports from the scouts," said Sumpter.

Three hours passed and then one of the scouts came in with a report.

"It is a large force of British," he said, "and as near as I can make out it is bound for Camden."

"What do they think of the scene down there where their comrades are lying thick as the leaves?" asked Sumpter.

"They are almost wild with rage; they don't seem to know what to think, however."

"I wonder if there is any danger that they will try to hunt us down?"

"I think it quite likely; they are very angry."

"I have no doubt regarding that. But how many men have they, anyway?"

"There must be three thousand, at least."

"Too many for us to attack."

"Yes, that would be too big a contract," said Pickens.

Just then another scout came in.

"The British are wild with rage and swear that they will hunt down the rebel force that did the work down there and wipe it off the face of the earth!" he said.

"What had we better do?" asked Sumpter.

He and the other three commanders conferred together, and it was finally decided that it would be best to split up for the present and each force go in a different direction; in this manner it would be comparatively easy to elude the redcoats and keep out of their way.

And this was done. Twenty minutes later the four parties separated and rode away in as many different directions.

## CHAPTER VII.

### ANDY IS DISCHARGED.

As the "Liberty Boys" went in the direction of Mr. Winters' home, where Andy Jackson was staying, he remained with them.

"What are you going to do, Mr. Slater?" the boy asked. "Are you going to leave this part of the country?"

"I don't think we will leave right away, Andy," was the reply; "I am averse to letting the British run me out."

"Where will you stay, then?"

"I hardly know; we might go to the place where Sumpter had his encampment and stay there for a few days."



"I know a better place than that," said the boy.

"You do?"

"Yes."

"Where is it?"

"It's about three miles this side of Mr. Winters', where I live."

"What sort of a place is it?"

"It is just the finest place in the world. It is a little open space in the timber back of the home of a patriot family by the name of Somers."

"But perhaps this man would not like to have us around."

"Yes, he would."

"You are sure?"

"Yes; he is a strong patriot, and is not afraid of the British or Tories. He'll be glad to have you stay there and will furnish you with all the provisions you want."

"That will be nice," said Dick; "we'll stop there and have a talk with him, anyway."

"Oh, you won't be able to get away from him," with a smile; "you'll have to stay there as long as you are in this part of the country."

A little more than an hour later the party of "Liberty Boys" drew up in front of the house of Mr. Somers, the patriot. He was at home and was a whole-souled, jovial man, who, as soon as he learned who the youths were, greeted them joyously.

"You are welcome to camp over in the field and stay as long as you want to," he said; "and I have plenty of provisions for your men and feed for your horses; you are welcome—yes, more than welcome!"

He led the way down a narrow lane, past his house and stable and on back into the timber. The timber at this point was only a narrow strip, however, and almost immediately they emerged into a natural amphitheatre about two acres in extent and surrounded on all sides by timber.

"How will this suit you for a camping ground?" Mr. Somers asked.

"It could not suit us better," said Dick; "it is the nicest place for a camp that I have ever seen."

"Well, you are welcome to stay here as long as you want to."

"Thank you, Mr. Somers."

"You are welcome; but, by the way, weren't your men in the party that went past here this morning, going east?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where are the others?"

"We divided up and went in different directions; there were four parties."

"Whose were they?"

"Sumpter's, Marion's and Pickens', besides my own 'Liberty Boys.'"

"Where did you go?"

"To Hanging Rock."

"Yes?"

"Yes; there was a regiment of redcoats encamped there and we went and made an attack on them."

"I understand; what success did you have?"

"The best in the world," and then Dick told of the battle with the British.

"Jove! that is good news!" Mr. Somers cried. "But you say a strong force of British appeared and you had to get away from the vicinity of Hanging Rock?"

"Yes; we thought we could elude pursuit better by separating, and did so."

"Exactly; and the probabilities are that the British will come this way looking for you?"

"I think it more than likely; but they will have hard work finding us here."

"So they will."

The "Liberty Boys" had been busy, and had by this time unbridled and unsaddled their horses and tied them to trees at the edge of the open space. Then they began making arrangements for camping more or less permanently.

"Well, I must be going on back to Mr. Winters," said Andy Jackson.

"I suppose we will see you again, Andy?" asked Dick.

"Yes, I'll come over every once in a while," was the reply; "and if you get into another fight with the redcoats I want to be in it."

"All right," smiled Dick; "you shall be in it if you are around at the time."

"Good! I'll try to be on hand."

Then Andy took his departure.

"There goes as brave a boy as ever lived," said Dick as the boy disappeared.

"He's a fine boy," agreed Mr. Somers. "He's a patriot while Winters is a Tory, and a hard man to work for anyway, and I told Andy to come and work for me, but he said that he had promised to stay with Winters a year when he went to work for him, and that he would do as he had agreed, unless the man tried to abuse him. I told him that if ever anything happened to come to me and that I would give him work and a home as long as he wanted it."

"He is a boy who would be a big help on a farm, I should say," said Dick.

"Yes, he isn't afraid of work."



Meantime Andy had reached the main road and was riding onward at a gallop. Twenty-five minutes later he reached the Winters home and was greeted eagerly by the farmer and his wife.

"Did ye git ter Hangin' Rock in time, Andy?" the man cried.

The boy shook his head.

"No, I didn't get there in time," he replied.

"An' ye didn't git ter warn ther British?"

"No."

"An' did ther rebels attack ther British?"

"Yes."

"Which whupped?"

"The patriot force whipped the British."

"Ye don' mean et?" gasped Winters.

"Yes, I do."

"An' ther rebels whupped ther British?"

"Worse than that. They very nearly wiped the British off the earth!"

"Ye don' mean et!" in a gasp.

"Fur ther lan's sake!" from Mrs. Winters.

"Yes; the patriots killed very nearly all the British."

"But I don' see how they c'u'd hev done et," said Mr. Winters.

"It was simple enough. They took the British by surprise, you know."

"Yas, thet wuz how et wuz done. I see et all; but w'y didn't ye git theer in time ter warn ther British?" in an angry and suspicious tone.

"I couldn't get there, sir," was the reply.

"W'y couldn' ye?"

"Bob couldn't go fast enough to get me there."

"I don' berleeve et!" the man cried. "I don' berleeve ye tried ter git theer in time!"

"Oh, yes, I did!"

But Winters shook his head again.

"Ye kain't make me berleeve et," he asserted, positively; "I'd bet er hoss ye didn' try ter git theer in time, an' I wuz er fool ter think ye would, in ther furst place. I might hev knowed ye wouldn' do et, fur ye air er rebel yerself!"

"I am not a rebel," the boy said. To himself he said that there was a difference between a rebel and a patriot.

"I know better; ye hev allers leaned thet way, an' I know ye air er rebel."

"I'm not a 'rebel,' Mr. Winters; but I will acknowledge that I am a patriot."

"Et's all ther same."

"No, there is a difference, but I don't suppose I could make you see it."

"No, ye couldn'—'cause theer hain't none."

"I think there is considerable."

"Waal, et hain't no use uv our quarrelin' over er leetle thing like thet; but I mus' say, Andy, thet I don' think I wanter hev er rebel aroun' me, an' I guess ye hed better pack up yer duds an' go."

"All right, Mr. Winters; of course, you are the one to say, and I will go at once."

To tell the truth, Andy was glad that he had been discharged. He knew that he could get work at the home of Mr. Somers, and as the latter was a patriot, it would be much more pleasant working for him than for Winters.

"I'll put Bob in the stable," said Andy, "and then I'll get my things and go."

He led the horse to the stable, unbridled and unsaddled him, gave him some feed and then patting him on the neck, went out and made his way to the house.

He went up into the room that he had occupied while living with Mr. Winters, and quickly tied his clothes up into a compace bundle. Then he made his way downstairs, and pausing in the sitting-room where the farmer and his wife were, said:

"Good-by, Mr. and Mrs. Winters, I'm going now."

"Hol' on, Andy," said the farmer; "Marthy an' me hev be'n torkin' ther matter over an' I've cum ter ther conclushun thet et hain't none uv my bizness ef ye air er rebel. Yer kin work jes' ez good an' air worth jes' ez much ter me, an' so ef ye wanter ye kin stay."

The fact of the matter was that Andy was an extraordinarily good worker, and that he did as much work as a man would do, and for less pay; besides this, he was good to help around the house, and it was due to Mrs. Winters that the farmer had changed his mind about turning the boy off. Andy, however, knew that there was a place awaiting him at Mr. Somers' house, and he felt that he would much rather work for the patriot than for the Tory, so he shook his head and said:

"I guess I won't stay, Mr. Winters, thanking you for your kindness in offering to let me remain."

The two looked blank at this.

"Ye—won't—stay?" gasped the man.

"No."

"But ye hev er good home heer, Andy, haven't ye?"

"Oh, yes, sir; I have no complaint to make, but we differ on the important question of king or no king, and I think it will be best for me to go."



"But we won't say er word erbout thet," said Mrs. Winters. "Dave wuz er fool ter say whut he did, ennyway."

"Yas, I hed no bizness ter twit ye with bein' er rebel, Andy, an' ef ye'll stay an' work fur me we won't neether wun uv us ever say ennythin' erbout ye bein' er rebel."

"Ye've got er right ter be er rebel ef ye wanter, Andy, ther same ez we hev got ther right ter be loyal ter ther king," from the woman.

"You are right about that," said the boy; "but I think that I had better go. Then there will be no chance for misunderstandings in the future."

"Ye won' stay?" from the man.

"No, I will go and make sure that we won't have trouble in the future by not making it possible for us to have."

"I think thet's kinder mean uv ye, Andy!" said the farmer, an angry look in his eyes.

"I don't think so, sir. You told me I was discharged and I have a perfect right to take you at your word."

"But I've changed my min', an' I don' want ye ter go."

"That may be, but if you had not changed your mind I could not have stayed no matter how bad I might have wanted to do so, and so I shall exercise my right and go."

"Thet's whut I call ongratefulness!" snapped the woman, who was somewhat of a virago when she wanted to be.

"I don't see that I should be particularly grateful to you, Mrs. Winters," said Andy.

"Ye don'?"

"No."

"Hain't we giv' ye er good home heer?"

"No, I paid for it—paid for it with labor, Mrs. Winters, and paid well. I think you will acknowledge that, won't you?"

"Waal, ye've done tolerable well, Andy."

"I think I have. I have worked hard, have worked early and late, and I am confident that I have earned all that I have received at your hands. I don't believe that any charge of ungratefulness could be made against me."

"Waal, I sh'd think thet ye orter hev some regard fur our desires, Andy, an' now thet we hev acknowledged thet we wuz wrong, ye hed orter stay with us."

"No, I cannot stay," was the decided reply; "I am glad that you acknowledge that you were wrong, and that I earned all that I have received from you, but now that Mr. Winters has discharged me I prefer to accept the discharge and go. Good-by."

And Andy walked out of the house, leaving two angry and disappointed people behind him, for the boy was a valuable hand and the two well knew it.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE REDCOAT'S PROPOSITION.

When an hour later Andy Jackson presented himself before Mr. Somers and told him that he had been discharged by Mr. Winters and had come to work for him Mr. Somers was delighted.

"Good!" he exclaimed. "Jove! I'm glad Winters discharged you, Andy! But why did he do it?"

"Because I am a 'rebel,' as he calls the patriots."

"So that was his reason, eh?"

"Yes."

"What a fool he is!"

"He and his wife tried to get me to stay," went on Andy, "but I knew you were willing to give me work, and as I would rather work for a patriot than a Tory, I refused to stay and came away."

"Ah, they saw their mistake and wanted you to stay anyhow, eh?"

"Yes."

"Well, I'm glad you refused. I can use you, Andy, and you may consider yourself a fixture here as long as you wish to stay—even if you should turn Tory, though I know there is no danger of that."

"I should say not!" with a smile.

Mr. Somers went to the house with Andy and told his wife that the boy was to make his home with them.

"Give him a good room, Hannah," he said, "for he is a good boy and a good patriot."

Andy was soon domiciled under the Somers' roof, and having placed his clothing in the room designated to him he went out and insisted on beginning work at once. He helped feed and water the horses and milked the cows, and by that time supper was ready.

The Winters were rather parsimonious people, and never set a very good table, but the Somers were just the opposite. They believed in having plenty of good food, and the supper that Andy sat up to that evening was a revelation to him.

"Goodness!" he said to himself, "I guess I won't ever have to go hungry to bed while I am in this house."

Mr. and Mrs. Somers had one child, a daughter aged about seventeen. Her name was Jennie, and she was a pretty girl, and was good-natured and pleasant and jolly, as she could hardly help being with such parents.

They had known each other for some time, so Andy



perfectly at home and talked and laughed and enjoyed himself very much.

"I'm so glad that you are going to live with us, Andy!" said Jennie. "I'm going to play you are my brother. Isn't that be nice?"

"It'll be nice for me to play that I have such a nice sister," said Andy.

"Oh, just listen to that, mother!" exclaimed the girl, with a laugh; "he is a regular little flatterer, isn't he?"

"No, I meant it," said Andy.

Just then there came a knock on the front door and Mr. Somers rose from the table and walked into the sitting-room and opened the door.

Standing on the porch was a British officer in the uniform of a captain, and a glance out toward the road showed the farmer that there was a large force of redcoats there. The brief glance that he gave was not sufficient to allow of sizing the force up very closely, but he guessed that there must be at least one hundred.

"Ah, good evening, sir," said the officer, bowing; "I would like to ask you a few questions, if you have no objection."

"I have no objections, sir," was the quiet reply. "What are the questions?"

"I would like to ask if you have seen any parties of strange men go along the road here this afternoon?"

Mr. Somers shook his head.

"I have not," he replied.

"You are sure?" The officer looked at the farmer sharply, and from his tone it would seem that he did not believe what the other said.

Mr. Somers met the redcoat's gaze unflinchingly.

"I am sure," he replied, quietly.

"Well, have you seen one party of men go along the road this afternoon or evening?"

The farmer did not believe it any sin to mislead the enemy by false statements, so he answered, promptly:

"No, sir, I have not."

The British officer looked as if he did not believe the statement.

"I am afraid your memory is bad," he said, almost indolently.

"No, I have an excellent memory."

"I fear I cannot agree with you in that statement; I do not think you have a good memory, for I am confident that one or more parties of rebels have passed along this road this afternoon or evening."

"I suppose I cannot help what you believe or do not believe," was the calm reply. "I can merely state the facts,

and then it is for you to do as you like about accepting them."

The officer glanced through the doorway and on into the kitchen, where Mrs. Somers, Jennie and Andy Jackson were seated at the table.

"I'll just see if one of those people won't have a better memory than you possess, my friend," said the captain, and he pushed past the patriot without ceremony, and walked through the sitting-room and out into the kitchen.

An angry light appeared in Mr. Somers' eyes, but he did not say anything. He followed the officer into the kitchen, however, and stood waiting to see what the fellow would do.

"Ah, good evening, ladies and sonny," he said almost insolently, "I wish to ask a question and I want a truthful answer. Let me see, I guess this beautiful maiden will be the proper person to question, for surely you would not tell a lie, miss?"

Andy Jackson's eyes flashed and involuntarily he clenched his fist. It was with an effort that he kept from saying something which would have aroused the Briton's anger; he was assisted in controlling his impulse by a warning look from Mr. Somers.

"If you have a question to ask, ask it, sir," said the girl, with dignity.

"Oh, my!" said the officer, mockingly. "Why, she has the airs of a lady. What dignity! It is wonderful, coming from a peasant American girl."

"Do you think it gentlemanly to insult a girl in that manner?" asked Mr. Somers, his voice hoarse with suppressed passion.

"Oh, you keep still!" cried the captain, angrily. "Speak when you are spoken to."

"If you were not backed by a hundred men you would not dare talk in such an insolent manner!" said Mr. Somers. "That, of course, makes it possible for you to say what you please, with impunity."

"I would talk as I pleased if I were alone," was the haughty reply. "And now, girl, tell me, have you seen a party of men on horseback pass this house this afternoon or evening?"

"I have not," was the prompt and decided reply. "They did not pass," the girl added to herself, "they stopped."

The redcoat regarded the girl searchingly.

"Are you speaking the truth?" he asked.

"I am."

The girl's tone had all the accents of truth, yet the redcoat was not willing to believe her. He shook his head and frowned.

"I don't believe you are telling the truth," he said.



"Now, listen to me," said Mr. Somers. "What would be the good of our denying that we saw a party of horsemen pass here if we had seen them?"

"Why, you would throw us off the track as we would think that we were on the wrong track and turn back."

"We could have no knowledge that you would turn back, if told that no party had passed here, and if a party of horsemen had passed they would doubtless be far away and out of your reach, so there would be no reason why we would deny it."

"I think you are rebels," was the dogged reply; "and I am sure you are lying to me."

"We have told you the truth and nothing but the truth."

"I don't believe it, and I have a good mind to turn my men loose and let them burn you out of house and home. We have lost nearly a thousand brave fellows to-day, the work of rebel fiends, and we do not feel very kindly disposed toward rebels or their sympathizers, I tell you!"

The captain's tone was fierce and there was a savage light in his eyes.

"Well, we know nothing of the matter you speak of," said Mr. Somers; "so I don't see why you should wish to visit vengeance on the heads of innocent parties."

Andy Jackson got quietly up from the table at this juncture, and, putting on his hat, said to Mr. Somers:

"I guess I'll go out and turn the horses into the pasture."

"All right, Andy," was the reply, and the boy opened the kitchen door and went out of doors, the British officer making no attempt to stop him. The fact was that Andy, being small for his age, and acting so calmly, seemed to be such a harmless little chap that the redcoat could not imagine that it would hurt to let him go; yet at the same time he was doing a very bad thing for himself, for Andy Jackson was leaving the house, not to "turn the horses into the pasture," but to hasten to tell Dick Slater and the "Liberty Boys" of the presence of the redcoats.

Mr. Somers knew what Andy intended doing, and a feeling of admiration for the shrewdness and coolness of the boy took possession of him.

"Good for Andy!" he said to himself; "he'll go and tell Dick Slater about the redcoats being here, and the 'Liberty Boys' will come and go for the rascals red-hot. Now the best thing I can do is to cause as much delay as possible, so as to give Dick and his men time to get ready to do their work."

The British captain was eyeing the farmer's daughter closely, and was evidently turning some project over in his mind.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," he said, presently; "I have

a proposition which I will make to you: If your daughter will give me a dozen kisses I will not turn my men on the house, but will spare it. What do you say?"

"You brute!" exclaimed the girl, her face crimson.

"Surely you do not mean that!" exclaimed Mrs. Somers, a look of horror and anger in her eyes. "No gentleman would make such a proposition as that."

"Oh, come now, that isn't a bad proposition," said the captain; "I am not at all a bad fellow, and there are a great many of girls who would be more than pleased to give me many kisses."

"Go to those girls and get the kisses, then," said Jennie with spirit; "don't come bothering around a girl who does not want them."

"Oh, but that makes the kisses all the more desirable," said the redcoat, with a leer; "that is human nature, I know."

"But, captain, you should not make such a proposition," said Mr. Somers. "As my wife has said, I don't think it is an act becoming an officer and a gentleman."

"Oh, I'm just a plain, human man," grinned the captain; "I don't lay much claim to the title of gentleman."

"You couldn't substantiate your claim if you did try to do so," said Jennie.

"Perhaps not; but that is neither here nor there. Will you accept my proposition, sir?" to the farmer.

"No!" was the decided reply.

The redcoat looked disappointed. He hesitated, and then said:

"You had better think it over. The proposition is in your favor. It is one-sided, like the handle on a knife; for if I like I can take the kisses, anyway, and turn my men loose on the house, just the same."

"You would not dare!" cried Jennie.

"Oh, yes, I would!" with a leer.

"Surely you would not be so mean as to do that!" exclaimed Mr. Somers.

"Oh, yes; I will not allow myself to be balked, once I have set my head on a thing."

"But perhaps you might get yourself in trouble if you tried any such thing as that," said the patriot.

"How could I get myself in trouble?" with a surprised look.

"Oh, I don't know."

The officer looked at the farmer suspiciously, and then, turning, walked to the front door of the sitting-room and looked out. His men were sitting their horses, patiently waiting for the return of their commander. Everything



ed quiet and serene, and there was nothing to be in that looked suspicious.

"Hi, there, Jackson!" called out the officer.

"Yes, sir?" came back the reply.

"Keep your eyes open, Jackson!"

"All right, sir."

"There might be a band of rebels around here somewhere, and we don't want to allow ourselves to be taken by surprise."

"You are right, sir; we'll keep our eyes open and no rebels will take us by surprise."

"There," said the officer, with an air of satisfaction, "he turned back toward the kitchen, 'if you are expecting any rebels to come to your assistance it will do no good. I tell you, I am a hard man to get the better of!'"

By the officer had reached the kitchen door by this time, as he glanced through the doorway a cry of rage escaped his lips. The glance had shown him that the girl was gone. While he was talking to his man Jackson, Jennie had risen and stolen out of the kitchen. She had gone out of doors, but the redcoat supposed she had gone to some other room.

"You scoundrel!" he roared, turning upon Mr. Somers with the ferocity of a maddened tiger. "You think you have done something smart—but I'll teach you! I'll make a wish you had not attempted any foolishness!"

As the officer spoke he started to draw his sword, and with his anger over the disappearance of the girl he might have killed the man, but at this instant something occurred to turn his attention in another direction:

The sound of a volley from at least a hundred muskets was heard, and following close upon the heels of the roar the volley rose shrieks, yells and curses.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE "LIBERTY BOYS" STRIKE A BLOW.

When Andy Jackson got safely out of the house he drew breath of relief.

"Now I am all right," he said to himself; "I will hurry and warn Dick Slater of the presence of the redcoats."

He ran at the top of his speed toward the timber at the rear of the stable. He entered the path, hastened onward through the timber and was soon in the little open space in which the "Liberty Boys" were encamped.

He hastened to where Dick Slater was sitting, talking

to Bob and three or four of the youths, and said, in some excitement:

"Mr. Slater, there are a hundred redcoats out in front of Mr. Somers' house, and the captain of the force is in the house and I think he is going to make trouble for Mr. Somers!"

The "Liberty Boys" were on their feet in a jiffy.

"What's that you say?" exclaimed Dick. "Is that the case, sure enough?"

"Indeed it is, sir!"

"Very well; then we must go and give the redcoats a surprise—eh, boys?"

"Yes, yes!" in chorus.

"Then get ready immediately. We must not give the redcoat captain time to cause Mr. Somers' folks trouble."

"He was threatening to let his men burn the house unless Jennie gave him some kisses," said Andy.

"The cowardly scoundrel!" exclaimed Dick.

The youths were soon ready, and they stole away, Dick in the lead. They made their way around in a half circle, and got within musket-shot distance without their coming having been discovered. They were hidden by some trees.

The young leader of the "Liberty Boys" gave the order to take aim, and when the youths had done this he gave the order to fire.

Crash—roar! the volley rang out, and twenty-five to thirty of the redcoats went down, dead and wounded. It was this volley that had stayed the hand of the British captain as he was about to draw his sword to cut Mr. Somers down.

"I'll settle with you later!" he hissed to Mr. Somers, and then he dashed out of the house to see a sight which almost caused his blood to run cold with horror. He saw one-third of his force down in the road, dead and wounded, with the snorting horses kicking and plunging about on the bodies, and as the shrieks, groans and curses went up a cry of rage escaped his lips and he dashed forward.

"At them, men!" he roared. "Charge the scoundrels!"

Crash—roar!

Another volley rang out and fifteen to twenty of the redcoats went down. This was too much, and the rest whirled their horses and rode away at the top of the animals' speed. The captain, seeing that he was left alone, leaped upon his horse and dashed away in pursuit.

When he overtook his men he ordered them to halt, and when they had done so he upbraided them for fleeing.

"Why didn't you charge the scoundrels as I ordered you to do?" he asked.

"It would have been suicide to do so, captain," said one.



"It certainly would!" from another.

"Yes, there must be a large force of the rebels."

"I think we are lucky to get off as well as we have."

"I don't think there is a large force there," the captain said; "I don't believe there is more than one hundred, and we had that many men."

"Yes, 'had' that many men," replied one soldier, emphasizing the "had."

"I am aware that we haven't that many men now," was the sullen reply; "but how happens it, Jackson, that you were taken by surprise? I warned you to have your eyes open."

"I know you did, and we did the best we could. The first we knew that there was an enemy near was when the scoundrels poured in that deadly volley upon us."

"They are a dangerous lot of men, I tell you!" from another of the redcoats.

"Oh, they took you by surprise and at a disadvantage? With a fair chance I have no doubt you could whip them easily."

"Yes; but getting the fair chance, that is the difficulty."

"Well, the question now is: What shall we do?" the captain said.

The men said it was more than they could say what should be done.

"We mustn't go away and leave our wounded men lying there to die of their wounds and suffer untold agony," the captain said.

The rest concurred in this view of the case.

There was only one thing to do under the circumstances, and the British captain did it. He sent a flag of truce, asking that his force be allowed to return and minister to the wounded men, and the messenger came back soon and said that the permission had been granted.

They went back and buried their dead and carried their wounded away in rudely devised blanket hammocks.

They made their way back to Hanging Rock, and the captain went at once to the commander of the force there and reported. The officer, a general, listened in amazement, and when the other had finished an exclamation of anger escaped him.

"Do you mean to tell me that you have lost half your force, Captain Hendricks?" he asked.

"Well, not half my force—about thirty men dead, sir; we have a dozen severely wounded, however."

"Humph! Have you any idea regarding the identity of the scoundrels who did the work?"

"No, save that it must have been one or more of the partisan rebel bands operating in this part of the country."

"Marion's or Sumpter's, eh?"

"Yes—or both together."

"That is probably it," with a nod. "Well, the question is: What are we going to do about it?"

The captain shook his head.

"I don't know," he said.

"Would you like to go after the scoundrels with strong force, captain?"

The officer's face lighted up.

"I would!" he replied eagerly.

"Very well; take as many men as you think you will need and go after them."

"Right away?"

"Yes; the quicker, the better."

"True; for they are likely to get away otherwise."

"Kill or disperse the scoundrels, captain, if you can counter them."

"I will do so!"

After a few more minutes of conversation the captain withdrew and went to his own quarters. He went to work getting up the party to go after the "rebels," and there was no difficulty in getting all the men he wanted. Indeed, all the soldiers were eager to go.

Captain Hendricks selected three hundred men, and then he set out. They rode as rapidly as was possible, and two hours later were at the home of Mr. Somers.

Here everything was quiet. The house was dark and was evident that the inmates were in bed.

Captain Hendricks ordered that a thorough search of the ground in the vicinity of the house be made, and the men began the work. They found the little basin at the back of the farmer's stable, surrounded by the timber, and saw that there had been a camp here recently; but no one there.

"Here is where the scoundrels were encamped when they attacked us," said the captain, with an oath. "This farm is undoubtedly a rebel, and knew they were encamped here—and, yes, I see it all now! When that boy left the house saying he would go and turn the horses into the pasture he went to inform the rebels of our presence. Yes, that is it. I see it all now when it is too late."

The captain was angry and disgusted, to think that he had permitted himself to be fooled so easily by people upon whom he had looked with contempt. But it made him the more determined to find the "rebels," and his vengeance upon their heads.

"Keep on searching, men," he said; "they must be in this vicinity. I don't believe they are far away."

The captain was pretty shrewd in his way, and he



son for thinking the patriot force was near at hand was  
he felt confident it would remain near at hand, in  
er to be where it could render the patriot family assist-  
in case the British attempted to burn the house or  
other injury.

The soldiers searched for hours, and could not find any  
of the patriots, and at last, almost worn out, they  
into camp in the road in front of the house. Sen-  
were placed so as to make it impossible for the force  
taken by surprise, and then the weary soldiers lay  
and went to sleep.

The redcoats came very near eating Mr. Somers out of  
se and home next morning, and when the morning meal  
ended Captain Hendricks engaged Mr. Somers in con-  
tation.

"What is your name, sir?" he asked, sternly.

"William Somers," was the reply.

"And you are a rebel?"

"I suppose it would do no good for me to deny it."

"Not a bit!"

"No; for you wouldn't believe me."

"I certainly would not."

"So I thought."

"Tell me where that rebel force went."

"Mr. Somers shook his head.

"I can't do that, sir."

"You can't?"

"I cannot."

"You mean you won't?"

"No, I mean that I can't."

"Why can't you?"

"Because I don't know where it is."

"Bosh!"

"You don't believe me?"

"No!"

"I am telling you the truth, nevertheless."

"Bah! you can't fool me."

"I am not trying to do so."

"I know better."

The farmer shook his head.

"Doubtless you think you do," he said; "but I assure  
that you do not."

"You do know where that rebel force is!" The cap-  
spoke almost fiercely.

"No!"

"I say, yes! And I want you to tell me where it is  
reted, do you hear?"

"I hear, yes."

"Then tell me."

"I have already told you that I do not know, so how  
could I possibly tell?"

"But I know you do know!"

"You are mistaken, sir."

The captain eyed the man searchingly for a few mo-  
ments, and Mr. Somers met the gaze unflinchingly.

"Where is your son?" Captain Hendricks asked,  
presently.

"My son?"

"Yes."

"I have no son."

"You haven't?" in surprise.

"No."

"Then who was the boy at the table with you last night,  
and who went out and warned the rebels that we were  
here?"

"The boy was a boy who works for me; but I don't  
know what you mean by saying that he warned the rebels  
that you were here."

"Oh, don't you?" sneeringly.

"No."

"Well, you needn't think you can fool me, my man!"

"I am not trying to fool you."

"Yes, you are; but it won't work. I know as well as  
you do that the boy went out to the little basin back of  
the stable, where the rebels were encamped, and told them  
we were here."

"I don't know what you mean." Mr. Somers, for a  
novice, did some very creditable acting.

The captain laughed.

"Oh, yes, you do!"

"I assure you I do not."

"Do you mean to say that you did not know that a force  
of rebels was encamped in your own grounds and within  
a stone's throw of your house?"

"Certainly I do, sir."

"Well, that simply proves that you are a great liar!"

"Oh, well, it is useless for me to deny anything, I see,"  
with a sigh of resignation.

"When I know that you are telling what is untrue, yes."

"I won't deny anything, sir. Just go ahead and make  
out any kind of a case and I will not deny it or say you  
are wrong."

"Bah! Then you refuse to tell me where the rebel  
force is?"

"I don't know where it is."

"Bosh! But the boy, where is he?"

"I don't know that, either."

"He isn't here, then?"



"No."

"He didn't come back after 'turning the horses into the pasture?'" in a mocking tone.

"No."

"That's too bad; you should go and look after him. It is probable that the horses have kicked his brains out!"

"No, they didn't do that, for I did go and look."

"Ah, you did?"

"Yes."

"And saw no signs of him, eh?"

"None."

"Well, I'll find him for you."

"You will?"

"Yes; when I find the rebel force I will find him with it."

"I don't think so."

"Oh, well, you are at liberty to think as you like; I am confident that I am speaking only the truth. And I will find the rebels, too, never fear! They will not be able to escape me."

"I hope you may do so."

"You don't hope any such thing."

"Yes, I do." Mr. Somers made the mental observation, however, that he hoped the redcoats would get soundly thrashed if they found the "rebels."

"All right; you will get your wish. We will find the rebels before this day is ended and will wipe them off the face of the earth."

"I should think you would be able to do so with the force you have."

"How many men have the rebels?" the captain asked, quickly.

"I don't know."

"Oh, don't you?" sarcastically.

"No."

"I judged that you did from the way you spoke."

"No, I know nothing whatever about the rebels."

"That will do for you to say, but I know better, and when I have run them to earth I will come back here and settle with you!" The captain's tone was fierce, and it was evident that he meant what he said.

"You don't owe me anything."

"Yes, I do; or, rather, you owe me something. Your daughter, too, owes me a dozen kisses, and I am going to collect them, too, never fear!"

Then the captain turned on his heel and mounting his horse rode down the road with the entire British force of three hundred at his heels.

"Jove! I hope Dick Slater and his 'Liberty Boys' will succeed in keeping out of their way!" the man murmured,

as he gazed after the redcoats; "but if the two forces come together I hope the 'Liberty Boys' will be victorious!"

## CHAPTER X.

### "THE 'LIBERTY BOYS' DEAD LINE."

What had become of "The Liberty Boys of '76"?

After the engagement the preceding night, and after the redcoats had buried their dead and departed with the wounded, Dick and his comrades had held a council. They decided that the British would not rest until they made an attempt to get even with them for striking a blow. This having been settled, it was easy to understand what steps would be taken by the British. They would hasten back to the spot with a strong force, eager to annihilate the "rebels."

"And they must not find us when they get here," said Dick.

The others concurred in this view of the case, and was finally decided that they would ride on down the road a mile or so and hide their horses deep in the woods, make a camp, and then they could have scouts and sentries out, to keep watch for the coming of the redcoats, when they came to keep watch over them.

"And we will hold ourselves in readiness for instant action, in case they go to burn Mr. Somers' house or do him any injury," said Dick.

"That's right," was the general cry.

This course was followed out to the letter. There was a point a mile from Mr. Somers' house, where there was a steep hill, with timber on both sides of the road, and a river not far away. This would be a splendid place to stand against the British, Dick reasoned, and they made their way to this point and led their horses deep into the timber and tied them to trees.

This done, a dozen of the youths were sent back to do scout and spy work in the vicinity of Mr. Somers' house while the rest made a comfortable camp of the new spot.

Mr. Somers' folks had been instructed to go to bed, the same as usual and as if nothing had happened or was expected to happen, and they did so; but Andy Jackson asked permission to remain with the "Liberty Boys," the permission was granted. He was happy, for he was a natural-born fighter and soldier, and he was eager for another chance at the British.

About midnight one of the scouts came into camp



information that the British were at the Somers house that they were searching all around.

"They're looking for us," said Dick, calmly.

"What do you say to letting them find us, Dick?" exclaimed Bob Estabrook, eagerly.

"All in due time, Bob. We must size them up well,

"Yes, of course."

"How many of them are there, do you think, Mark?"

"Dick of Mark Morrison, who was the scout that had sight in the news.

"I should say that there are at least three hundred,

"Three to one against us. Well, that is pretty strong

"Yes, but we can get the advantage in some way, Dick,

"lick them!" declared Bob.

"We will be governed by circumstances," said Dick,

"ly. "If they give up the search and return to Hang-

"Rock and do not attempt to do Mr. Somers' folks or

"erty any injury, it will perhaps be best to let them

"but if they stay and keep up the search for us, or if they

"tempt to do Mr. Somers any harm, in any way, then we

"attack them."

"This plan was followed out. A constant espionage was

"up on the redcoats, and not a move they made was

"known to Dick, for he had a scout or spy report to him

"every fifteen minutes. When at last the redcoats gave up

"search for the "Liberty Boys" and went into camp

"the night, Dick gave the matter of making an attack

"them serious consideration. He finally gave up the idea,

"never.

"I think it will be best to wait and see what they do

"morrow," he said; "they may return without trying

"ther to find us and without doing any damage to Mr.

"ners. In that event we will let them go, as they are

"strong for us to attack rashly."

"But we might strike them a severe blow to-night, Dick,"

"Bob.

"Not such a very strong blow, Bob, in my opinion, for

"boys say the redcoats have out a double row of sen-

"els, and it would be impossible to take them by surprise."

"Yes, that's so; well, do as you think best, Dick."

"And Dick did so. The "Liberty Boys" lay down and

"nt to sleep, and all was quiet till morning, and then

"scouts and spies were set to work again and they kept

"close watch on the actions of the British, and kept Dick

"ly informed.

"When the scouts brought him word that the redcoats

were coming down the road in the direction of the point where the "Liberty Boys" were encamped, Dick's jaws squared themselves and a determined light appeared in his eyes.

"I was in hopes that they would return to Hanging Rock," he said; "but as they have not seen fit to do so we will give them a warning, first, and if they don't take it, then we will give them a thrashing."

"That's the talk, Dick!" cried Bob Estabrook, who was one of those impulsive, hot-headed fellows. "I have only one suggestion to make."

"What is that, Bob?"

"That we thrash 'em first and warn them afterward."

The youth laughed. He was used to Bob and his ways.

"No, we will warn them first," he said, "and if they take the warning and turn back, well and good. We will let them go; but if they refuse to accept the warning, then there will be trouble."

"What kind of a warning are you going to give them, Dick?"

"Come out to the road, everybody," was the reply, "and I will show you.

The "Liberty Boys" hastened to obey, for they were not only curious to know what Dick intended doing, but were, like Bob, eager for a chance at the redcoats.

When they reached the road Dick told them to take their places at the top of the hill. They did so, and then he walked half way down the hill and stuck up a small Liberty flag or banner at either side of the road. This done, he went back up to where the rest were.

"What does that mean, Dick?"

"Yes, tell us!"

"Why did you stick up the two flags?"

"What kind of a warning do you call that?"

"Explain, old man!"

Such were a few of the exclamations, and when the youths had subsided Dick said:

"I'll tell you what that means, boys: I have made a dead line, and if the redcoats dare to cross it we will go for them, red-hot! Do you understand?"

"Yes, yes!"

"A dead line!—hurrah!"

"That's an idea!"

"And a good one!"

"Yes, if they cross the dead line then we will make them wish they hadn't!"

"That is the idea exactly, boys," said Dick; "when they put in an appearance I will first warn them not to cross



the dead line, and if they do so they will know what to expect."

"So they will!"

"Yes, yes!"

"It's a great scheme!"

"They'll cross it, though, Dick, I'm thinking," said Mark Morrison.

"You think so?"

"Yes."

"Very well; then we will give them such a warm reception that they will be glad to retire."

"That's the talk!" cried Bob Estabrook, and a number made remarks to the same effect.

"They will be here soon," said Mark Morrison.

"Yes, and we must be ready for them," said Dick; "boys, get ready, and remember that the instructions given you dozens of times before on such occasions, apply now. Take deliberate aim before firing and don't waste a shot. That is the secret of our success in whipping the British so easily on so many occasions."

"We'll attend to that part of it, all right, Dick," was the reply.

At this instant the sound of horses, galloping, was heard, and a few moments later the British came into view around a bend, and perhaps a quarter of a mile distant. As Dick and the "Liberty Boys" were standing out in full view they were seen instantly by the British, who gave utterance to wild yells of delight, and spurred their horses to renewed speed.

When the redcoats had advanced till nearly to the point where the flags were stuck in the ground the captain of the "Liberty Boys" raised his arm and made a restraining gesture. The redcoats understood the meaning of the gesture and brought their horses to a stop.

Dick stood in front of the "Liberty Boys," erect and brave-looking.

"The line between those two flags is the dead line," he called out to the redcoats; "cross it, if you dare!"

The redcoats had evidently not noticed the flags until then, for they looked at the flags, and then at one another. They seemed to hardly know what to think about the matter.

Captain Hendricks looked at the "Liberty Boys" in a speculative manner for a few moments and then to his men he said:

"It is just a scheme to try to frighten us off, but it won't work, eh, boys?"

"No, no! Let's go for the rebels!" was the cry.

So loud was the chorus that Dick heard and understood.

"You had better be warned and not cross the dead line, captain!" he called out. "If you do, you will regret it."

"Bah! you are simply trying to scare us off."

"No, I mean what I say."

"Humph! Who are you, anyway?"

"It doesn't matter who we are."

"I know who they air, capt'in!" called out a voice, and a man stepped out from among the trees near where the redcoats were. The man was Dave Winters.

"Who are they?" asked Captain Hendricks, who was rather curious regarding the matter.

"They air ther 'Liberty Boys,' thet's who they air!"

"The 'Liberty Boys'!" exclaimed the officer, while murmurs of surprise ran through the ranks of the redcoats.

"Yas, an' thet feller whut's torkin' ter ye is Dick Slater."

"Ah, ha! I've heard of you, Dick Slater, and of your 'Liberty Boys,' too!" cried the captain.

"Have you?" replied Dick.

"Yes; and I must say that I am glad of this chance to offer you battle."

"Are you?"

"Yes. I have often wished for a chance at you, for I have never believed you were the fighters you were said to be, and I wanted the chance to prove it."

"Oh, you did?"

"Yes."

"Well, here's your chance, then; go right in and prove it—if you can!"

"All right!" was the prompt reply. "Forward, men, and charge the insolent rebels! Wipe them off the face of the earth!"

The last part of the speech was shouted out, and with wild yells the redcoats urged their horses up the slope and galloped. The troopers drew their swords as they came and brandished the gleaming blades in the air.

Dick, seeing they were going to have all the chance in the world for doing deadly work, told the boys to take careful aim. Then he gave the command to fire.

Crash—roar! the volley rang out, and so careful had the "Liberty Boys" been of their aim, that terrible execution was done. At least seventy-five of the redcoats went down, dead and wounded, and the wild shrieks, yells, and curses were terrible to hear.

Wild with rage and eager to get revenge for the terrible devastation within their ranks, the redcoats dashed forward, but when they reached the top of the hill they found nobody there to be cut down.

The "Liberty Boys" were old hands at this sort of business, and were not the youths to stand and permit them-



lives to be cut down. It was their game, always, to kill many of the enemy as possible, with the least possible danger to themselves; but when the necessity arose, where there was nothing else to do, there were none who could stand their ground more bravely or fight more desperately. When they had fired the volley they had retreated to the shelter of the timber at the side of the road, and the instant the redcoats reached the top of the hill, the "Liberty Boys" poured two terrible volleys into the packed mass, from their pistols. At such short range the execution was almost as great as if the shots had been from muskets, and scores of the redcoats fell.

It was too much for them and they could not bring themselves to stand their ground, but whirled their horses' heads and fled.

That ended the battle. Captain Hendricks sent a flag of truce, and was permitted to bury the dead and carry the wounded away, and the force, now cut down to one-half what it had been, made its way back to Hanging Rock. The redcoats had crossed the dead line, and as Dick had told them they would, they regretted having done so.

The "Liberty Boys" were in the South quite a while, and had some lively adventures while there, soon making for themselves as great a reputation as they already had in the North.

THE END.

The next number (84) of "The Liberty Boys of '76" will contain "THE LIBERTY BOYS' 'HOODOOED'; OR, TROUBLE AT EVERY TURN," by Harry Moore.

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